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to expect, it is not known what suggested that digging might result in discoveries ; but it did, and two fragments of a stone were found which had sufficient portions of an inscription left to show that it must have been the one quoted in "The Lindsays of America."

Immediately a warm discussion began in the press. Mrs. Ayers produced the evidence of several reputable citizens of Northumberland and of a geological expert, but many of those who did not know her were unconvinced. That there should be two stones over one grave, erected in memory of the same people, seemed most improbable, and the doubt was heightened by the fact that Miss Lindsay's copy quoted correctly the Opie epitaph, which was stated by the copyist to be on the same stone with the Lindsay epitaph quoted by her.

The will in the text, coming to light after an interval of more than two hundred years, settles the question in a most remarkable manner. Thomas Opie says: "I would have likewise sent by my Executrix a Tombstone to Virginia to be put over my grave with my grandfather's on top." So the unprecedented did happen, and here was a grave with two tombstones upon it—one above the other. And the copyist quoted in "The Lindsays of America," Mrs. Ayers and Dr. Beale were all absolutely correct in their statements of what they found.

## VIRGINIA'S POSITION IN FEBRUARY, 1861.

### FAR REACHING IMPORTANCE OF HER DECLARATION FOR UNION.

#### VIEWS OF CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.

We have been granted the privilege of publishing the following letter from Mr. Charles Francis Adams. Mr. Adams is the President of our sister organization—The Massachusetts Historical Society—and has, by his labours and abilities, earned for himself an honoured place among students of American history. Himself an Union veteran of the Civil War, his views, with respect to the men and events of that period, possess a peculiar interest and value:

BOSTON, NOVEMBER 26, 1909.

*Mr dear Mr. Munford:*

I have now, at last, access to stenographers; and so am in position tardily to acknowledge the receipt of a copy of your book entitled, "Virginia's Attitude Toward Slavery and Secession," and to offer a few words of comment and criticism thereon.

In the first place, let me say that, to my mind, the chief value of your book—and in that respect it has great value—lies in a certain local significance—it is suggestive. Writing in a spirit of true historical investigation, you, a Virginian, deal with the problems and outcome of that agitation and consequent struggle in which Virginia was so deeply concerned, and yet, in doing so, indulge in no exaggerations of language, but evince throughout a most commendable spirit of moderation and of fairness. Your book is, if I may so term it, a *Vindiciae Virginiae*; and, largely because it is so fairly put, a very effective one. A happy absence of gush and effusiveness pervades it.

Of course a large part of your argument is already familiar to students of American history. Every one who has any knowledge at all of the record of Virginia knows of the anti-slavery sentiment which there existed prior to 1830 and the Nat Turner Insurrection; the very memorable utterances of the great Virginians on this head—more especially those of Jefferson and the Randolphs are also familiar. The confirmatory extracts you give from deeds and wills, while they indicate much research on your part, after all merely confirm and verify evidence already conclusive. The portion of your work, however, which to me seems to have a real present value is that wherein you develop the record of Virginia during the critical period of 1861. You speak within correct historical bounds, when you say (p. 255), had Virginia, when its vote was taken in February, 1861, "declared for a policy of immediate secession, it is almost certain that the remaining Southern States would have followed her example. In such event, President Lincoln would, on the day of his inauguration, have found the Capital of the Union encompassed by the States of Virginia and Maryland, both members of the new Confederation."

Largely overlooked in the glaring light of immediately subsequent events, this statement is literally true, nor have the historians of that period given due weight to the vital importance of the vote then cast in Virginia; but, remembering vividly almost every detail in the course of events of that period, I can bear personal evidence to the truth of what you assert. Had the strong hereditary Union sentiment then existing in Virginia not made itself felt, and had Virginia, on the 4th of February, 1861, thrown her voice and influence as decisively in favor of immediate secession as the six Cotton States had already thrown theirs, I entertain no doubt that, when the 4th of March dawned, the Confederacy would have been in full possession of the national capital, and, consequently, have demanded recognition from foreign powers as the *de facto* government. It would, also, in accordance with international usage, have

been recognized as such. Lincoln, on the other hand, would have been inaugurated at Chicago, or some other improvised capital, and the States of the Confederacy and the States of the Union would have confronted each other with governments *de facto* and *de jure*. It was the voice of Virginia which then called a halt, temporary but all-important, in the headlong course of events. That halt at the critical moment in the crisis of affairs, was decisive of ultimate results.

In discussing the outcome of events in history, it is useless to philosophize over what might have been. We have to confine ourselves to what actually did occur. My point now, however, is that at a most critical juncture—in what you well describe (p. 275), as “the great drama of diplomacy and play for position which preceded the Civil War”—the action of Virginia was decisive of what actually did occur. The traditional Union sentiment of Virginia upon which you dwell, was strong enough to prevent that crisis and catastrophe which, had its voice been less distinct, would have inevitably occurred. As to what the result of such action would have been had it been taken, one man’s guess is just as good as that of another. As a not uninformed participant in the course of events, my own guess, however, is that decisive, though precipitate, action then taken by Virginia would have been conclusive as to the result of the impending struggle. I have already elsewhere put on file my reasons for this belief. As the course of events in April, 1861, conclusively showed, Maryland would have followed the lead given by Virginia in the February preceding; and, with the Confederacy in possession of the National Capital, foreign recognition could hardly have been prevented. The result of the subsequent struggle would, I believe, have in that case been wholly different from what the historian has now to record. A square, knock-down blow, fortuitously given and unexpectedly received, before any conflict is seriously anticipated, can hardly fail to have a very decided influence on the succeeding phases of a struggle.

I cannot, therefore, but believe that, in the whole history of this continent, there was never a more momentous election utterance than that indecisive protest of Virginia’s expiring unionism. In bringing this fact to the front, and emphasizing it, you make a veritable contribution to history.

I agree also in the final and very forcible statement in the concluding pages of your book. If he would appreciate the forces which controlled the action of Virginia as respects Secession and the Civil War, the student of history must take into account the racial Virginian characteristics. You state them clearly; and already more than once I have, in public, said what you now assert, (p. 304), that

the people of Virginia at that time only took a stand which had been pre-determined for them "by the beliefs and avowals of successive generations." Opposed to them as I was, I too, think they were then "impelled by an unswerving idealism as their supreme incentive."

On the other hand, I cannot wholly concur in your apparent reprobation (p. 232), of what you term "the acrimonious discussions of thirty years, the conflicts over legislation, State and Federal, the criminations and recriminations of pulpit, press and platform," which, as you truly enough assert, at length produced "their baneful fruit in the destruction of tolerance, confidence and fraternity between the people of the two great sections." You state this in that strict spirit of impartiality characteristic of your whole book; but what in this way then took place was in my judgment simply the inevitable and unavoidable incident of every great agitation since the world began. Such agitations are necessarily worked up to a crisis by men who feel intensely. In men of that description we cannot look for sane measure in either speech or act; but, while not admirable, such are necessary, and without them as dynamic forces and factors agitations would die away, barren of result. From the beginning of recorded history to this day, no great moral uplift has ever been worked except through just such unpleasing tools and tactics. The anti-slavery agitation was, in the respects you refer to, in no way peculiar or especially reprehensible.

So far as the South, and even Virginia, were concerned, the real trouble arose from the fact you very clearly state (p. 48), that, after the invention of the cotton gin and the Nat Turner Insurrection, a large class in Virginia, and an immense preponderance both of thinking and of unthinking people in the Cotton States, accepted the institution of slavery as permanent, and "busied themselves marshalling arguments in vindication of its rightfulness." This admission, very significant as coming from a Virginian, goes to the root of the matter. When the pro-slavery feeling of the South had thus taken shape, it inevitably resulted that, soon or late, a counter feeling, equally bitter and denunciatory, would develop elsewhere. The result was William H. Seward's "irrepressible conflict."

An account, given by a Virginian, of Virginia as a factor in the problem both before it took shape, when it took shape, and in the final outcome of the resulting "irrepressible conflict," written in a spirit at once judicial and historic, ought to reach a large number of readers in the North. Should it do so, it will go far to modify many mistaken and erroneous impressions there still existing as to the attitude and the influence exercised by Virginia during a very memorable period and at a momentous historical crisis, the true inwardness and ultimate significance of which we are only now begin-

ning to fathom and forecast. Read from this point of view, your work is a valuable addition to the vast mass of material, connected with the War of Secession and the Struggle for Nationality, which the historian of the future must work over and assimilate.

Believe me, etc.,

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.

Beverley B. Munford, Esq.,  
Richmond, Va.

## GENEALOGY.

### THE BRENT FAMILY.

Compiled by W. B. CHILTON, Washington, D. C.

(CONTINUED.)

#### WILL OF GEORGE BRENT, OF WOODSTOCK.

In the name of God Amen. I George Brent of Wood Stock in Virginia, contemplating the fate of this mortal life do make and ordain this my last will and testament, in manner and form following:

First, I bequeath my soul to God, my Creator, & to the infinite mercies of my Redeemer my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by whose passion and merits alone I hope for salvation, through the divine justice, of God the Father and the holy Ghost.

I bequeath my body to the earth to be buried in a Christian manner, & all my worldly estate to be disposed of as follows (viz) to my son and heir. George Brent & to his heirs. for ever, I give all my lands & Rights to lands in England.

Also I give to my said son Geo. Brent, & to the heirs of his body all my lands at Wood Stock, viz five hundred acres bought of Giles Brent, Esq. three hundred acres bought of Mr. Henry Peyton, two hundred acres, part of five hundred bought of Mary Rinit—the other sold to Mr. Nicholas Hayward, and nine hundred acres that lies between mine and Mr. John Guin's land. Also I give to my said son and to the heirs of his body..... (page missing) (Daugh) ter Maria & for default of such heirs to my daughter Martha and the heirs of her body and for default of such heirs to my son Henry and his heirs for ever. To my said son Henry Brent & to the heirs of his body lawfully begotten I give four hundred acres the half of eight hundred acres of land held betwixt Colo. Fitzhugh & me & at